

Linda Clair
Seven-day Meditation Retreat
Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – March 2019
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 2c – Sunday afternoon discussion

Linda: You okay H.? Hard going?

Question: Hard going; trying really hard to be tough.

Linda: Don't try and be really tough. What do you mean by tough anyway?

Question: Not whinge too much to myself. (Laughter.)

Linda: You can whinge a bit.

Question: I am.

Linda: Probably thinking I've flown halfway across the world to sit here. Could be in Costa Rica.

Question: No, underlying all of that is deep gratitude to be here.

Linda: And it's the Sunday too. All you've got to do is get through the Sunday. (Laughter.) The rest is okay; the Sunday is the killer.

Question: I'm holding you to it.

Linda: I'm not saying it gets easier, but just today everyone is settling in and finding their place. "What am I doing here? I do want to be here. No, I don't. Yes, I do." Mind's going crazy, going: "Get out of here, get out of here."

You alright A.? You look a bit out of sorts.

Question: I'm okay. I'm a bit out of sorts, a bit all over the place. Lots of thoughts and crazy mental dream scenarios playing out in my head. Just trying to sit there though it and constantly come back to the breath and the body. It's been pretty exhausting but there's nowhere else I want to be or nothing else I want to be doing. But it's been a really challenging day for me today. But it's great, I can constantly remember that there's nothing else to do other than just see it and get as close to it as I can and experience it as clearly as I can. And then I'm off churning away again in some thoughts.

But I did have one question that isn't as directly related to practice today, but I guess it's been brewing for a little while. I've sort of noticed in myself now – there's been times where in the past it would be easier to just pretend you're not annoyed about something, or just keep the peace, or not act in full integrity. Whereas there's been a few little incidents recently where it feels like it's much harder not to act with integrity and show it if you're annoyed, or express if you're upset. It just feels really difficult to pretend otherwise. And in the past it's often – at least for me – been a much more

preferable approach to interacting with all sorts of people to just keep the peace and keep everything hidden. So that's been interesting to see that, and just to feel that what's there is what comes out.

And I've often felt that with you – there's nothing hidden, or there's nothing underneath – what you see is what you get and what you feel is what you get, and it's just there. And that sort of makes me wonder about all these stories you hear about enlightened people doing whatever, having affairs, or emotionally abusing people. It started making me think – how can you be in this state where you're just completely open and yet, to do this type of thing, it's almost like a complete contradiction of that. But someone must be doing it with a deep awareness of that contradiction, or at least a deep seeing of the damage they're doing – much more so than someone who is not awakened. Do you think?

Linda: It's tricky. I mean I can only really speak about myself. I know I'd never emotionally abuse someone, intentionally emotionally abuse someone. And what comes out of me is just what comes out. It's not perfect. You don't become this perfect person. At first I felt I should be this perfect person. You do sort of feel that. And there's a great pressure on you, particularly when you first start teaching, because everyone is subtly projecting, or grossly projecting, their idea of how you should behave onto you and trying to manipulate you in a way to suit their ideal. And then you do something that they don't like or they don't agree with and they say, "Oh, they shouldn't be acting like that, because it's this or that." You're still this human being – you're not this perfect person.

And you do stuff that might not seem ethical or anything like that, but it's real for you at that moment and authentic. Just like you're talking about getting angry – it's not like I never get angry. It does become almost, I'll say almost, impossible to be dishonest. I'm not saying I'm *always* totally honest but it becomes almost impossible to be dishonest. So you do get into a bit of trouble with people sometimes and it makes it a bit tricky. And you don't even realise that you're stirring people up at times, because you become in some ways a bit like a kid who's got no idea that they're being irritating and all that. Because you can't help it, you sort of can't help it. It's no excuse, but you don't have these morals anymore either where you feel, "Yes, I shall not do this, and I shall not do that." All the rules go out the window and you've got no idea what you're going to do, what you're going to say, how you're going to behave. So all I can say is I'm honest. There isn't any hidden agenda there; it's true – what you see is what you get. There's not this depth that's hidden, it's all on show. And I never know if I'm going to get a bit angry or not angry.

Some people probably aren't fully realised, or have had trouble coping with it. I mean it's hard for *everyone* to cope with it – I've had trouble coping with it. And so you do do things to release the pressure. It's a different sort of pressure. Leading up to it there's pressure but it's different to the pressure that you feel being free. It is a sort of weird pressure because you can never get out of it. You're always awake, you can never go to sleep. So you use certain things to take the edge off it at times, and they might not appear morally correct to some people, but that's how it is. And people do tend to put people onto a pedestal and say, "Oh yes, they're perfect," but it's not about that. But I don't know. And you never know with some of these stories what's completely true, what's not, what's been spread around by someone who's really dissatisfied or jealous or whatever.

I've said a few times it was great having my first teacher as a teacher because he was obviously not behaving the way I thought – although I went into it without a whole lot of expectations – but he didn't behave in the way that most people thought an enlightened being should behave. And it was

really good because he was just him. He was one of the most authentic people I've ever met because he just couldn't cover it up; he couldn't pretend to be anyone at all. You know you do see some people sitting up on a stage and it's obvious there's a bit of ego there and they're using it to connect with people, and it's great that they do that. But with him he just couldn't. He's just so childlike, and in that way innocent, he couldn't put on any sort of show. So it was really good for me to see that and to see him in his daily life and realise you don't turn into this god-like, perfect creature. You become more human than ever.

Question: I guess things like morals and other people's expectations don't matter so much anymore.

Linda: Yes, you just become authentic, and sometimes you might be a bit too authentic or a bit too over the top. 😊 You're operating from a place of integrity even if what you're doing doesn't appear to be morally right. You know morals are a very personal thing and what's right for one person is not right for another person. So it's very, very relative. But I've got no idea who I am really – I just do stuff – and sometimes I feel like getting directions on how to behave properly, because sometimes I just don't know. "Am I doing this right? Should you do this or this?" So it's nothing like you think it's going to be but there's this beautiful freedom where you can't put on an act anymore, you just can't. There's no desire to but you just can't.

Question: I guess part of this is also motivated by the fact that when I'm interacting with people I can feel a whole lot of stuff energetically that I never used to notice before and you can sense all this stuff. But I can see how easy it is – if you wanted – to sort of manipulate it in some ways as well, for your own benefit.

Linda: Yes. When I first started teaching I noticed I'd say, "Do something," and people would do it. And, "Oh! I could tell them to do anything and they'd do it!" Not that I wanted to but it just interested me that there was that power there to do that. It was not everyone of course but people who came to me as a teacher. So yes, some people probably do manipulate it, but I just don't know. I don't know what goes on with other people and if they're really enlightened or not. It's hard to say. Often there's still a bit of...

One of the reasons I teach as I do is so that when you come out of this you will be a more balanced enlightened human being. Because there are a lot of very unbalanced enlightened human beings around who have had realisations before they're quite ready and before everything has come into place. So it's why I do prefer people to have – we have these periods – but then you have to go out in the world and test it and become balanced. And most people here have got families and they just have a normal life on the surface, but realise that that's not going to completely satisfy them. But the sitting, the grounding, the applying this in your daily life, is really preparing you, preparing your body.

And I think some people's bodies aren't properly prepared for the shock of it and it does unbalance them. And what's left of the ego – and there's always a bit left, to some degree – can subtly start to dominate in a different way, so it can be there and just unbalance the whole thing. Maybe that's what happens. And I can see that that can happen and has happened in people. It doesn't mean they're not enlightened but there's something that hasn't quite been sorted out. So it's an interesting topic. And I'm not in their shoes so I don't know, I can only speak for me, and I can see that it changes radically over the years. The change after realisation is radical, it really is. That's the

most radical change, but then I can just feel that I'm so much more mature than I was even two years ago, it's incredible. It's really interesting.

Question: I wanted to ask you to elaborate on something you mentioned yesterday. I took your instructions – you told me, so I'm trying to follow. This is the instruction about going more into self.

Linda: I didn't say that. What did I actually say?

Question: About not just keeping the silence but avoiding eye contact.

Linda: About being more self-contained?

Question: Yes. I tried to do that yesterday and today and I found it very challenging. Because I've noticed how much I rely on – not speaking, but with the body and with eye contact – being nice. That's part of how I think of myself, as nice. And through that process I'm almost letting go of it and thinking, "Oh my god, what's left if I'm not nice?" Because that's something that I thought of myself. I'm open to seeing through the next days what happens, but it's almost like a fear: "What will I find? What if there's nothing?"

Linda: Well, I had that thing about nice too. I thought I was a really nice person. And I find it a bit challenging sometimes not looking at people and being more self-contained too. Because you tend to just go past someone and look at them, acknowledge them, smile. But instead you put your head down. And it's incredibly interesting and challenging and fascinating. But this thing of niceness – it's such a pressure to be nice. Yesterday I remembered my brother used to have this coffee cup and it said, "No more Mr Nice Guy." And it really fascinated me, I kept looking at it and going, "What does that mean?" And it just means you don't pretend – or this is what I felt – you stop pretending to be nice and trying to be nice to people. And if you have a break from trying to be nice it does force you to really look a bit closer into you, and stop using this niceness as a bit of a distraction and a way of communicating with people. So I don't know what you'll find. Eventually you'll find there's a depth there – in a way there's nothing there but it's full of everything. But it is good to practice not being polite and nice for a while. It doesn't mean you're nasty but you don't feel that you have to be nice. I did feel, "Oh yes, I was a nice person," and really I wasn't all that nice, because I was quite selfish – could be pretty horrible sometimes, just like everyone else. But I really thought I was this nice person.

Question: There is this sense of freedom because then you start thinking nice means accommodating, means almost forgetting about your own needs.

Linda: Well, it's a bit like what A. was saying about expressing what you feel, so you get angry sometimes. But if you feel like you've got to be nice all the time you're going to be repressing this stuff all the time. And it doesn't mean you're going to be angry. But a lot of people doing this practice have periods where this rage comes up, and anger, and all this stuff that they have been repressing for a long, long time.

So the trick is to be able to feel that and just be with it. And sitting still with that rage is very challenging. Because sometimes you just want to hit the person next to you or get mad at someone or whatever. But that being nice does tend to repress a whole lot of stuff that you are really feeling. So just allow it to come up, don't be scared. You'll probably go through a whole myriad of different

emotions and feelings. But this freedom from having to be nice for a few days is a freedom. It's not a restriction at all – the niceness is the restriction, not the letting go of it. So it might seem a bit cold and a bit unfriendly but don't worry about that.

Question: I need to ask you a question. Usually I just do my sits, since I've been traveling with you, and if I have a question I just go back to my breath or hearing what's around me or counting or my body, and eventually the question just disappears. So I've got to kind of trust that in a way, that that's what will happen. But underneath all that there is one question that comes up which is: when I'm sitting quietly and I'm not noticing – I can see thoughts, and then sometimes the thoughts aren't there for a little while, not long – but none-the-less under that it's as though there is a thought but I can't see it. It's just like a gauze over everything, so it's like I'm never actually seeing things as I feel they could be seen. Does that make sense?

Linda: Yes. So I would say that underlying thought is the "I" thought, the thought that, "I exist as a separate being, self," and that's what underlies all your thoughts. There is a lot of fear associated with that because if you realise you don't exist as a separate being there is this fear that you're going to die, and that is what is at the source of the desire to think. It all comes from fear. So when you say that sometimes there are no thoughts but really you do feel that there is a thought underneath, that's true. People talk about having periods with no thoughts but if it comes and goes it's still a very relative thing, because there is still that idea, that belief that I exist.

Question: So you're saying that belief is a wrong belief?

Linda: It's not wrong it's just not true. There is a difference.

Question: And how does one – I suppose it's a silly question – but how do you lift the gauze?

Linda: By doing this. Just keep seeing, come back to your body. Just keep doggedly doing this – seeing what you see and come back to your body. Using your body as your reference point rather than your mind.

Question: Which is what I try and practice since I met you, and it's been fantastic. But you know people talk about these amazing things happening but nothing amazing happens actually.

Linda: Well, what do you want to happen? What do you consider amazing?

Question: Well, anything. (Laughter.) I don't know – your wildest imagination something happening.

Linda: Yes, and it's just in your imagination, and that's what most experiences are, they're just in your imagination. And people make such a big thing of it and they talk about it and you read all these books about all these things that happen. You go: "Why isn't that happening to me?" Amazing things do happen but you don't see them a lot of the time because you're so busy looking for something amazing to happen. And it's happening but you just don't realise it's happening. You see it in things that you often dismiss in your daily life where you suddenly realise, "Oh yes, I've been doing that for a long time – I don't do that anymore. Oh well." That is amazing! I remember someone who had bitten their nails for their life and she just couldn't stop, and then she was doing this practice for quite a while and one day she realised she'd stopped biting her nails. And she went,

“Wow, that’s pretty amazing.” But it wasn’t the sort of amazing she was looking for. I mean you want all the lights to come on and to have all this amazing kundalini experience.

Question: Well, I’ve been to India. (Laughter.)

Linda: You’ve been there, done that. Now you’re doing the real stuff. Maybe you’ve had enough amazing experiences – and they’re all experiences. They come in, they start, they finish. Even the most seemingly amazing experience – eventually you see is just an experience. You know it’s going to start, peak, and then end. And that’s what I always used to hate about holidays, they’d start, they’d peak and then, “I’ve got to go back now.” That’s how I started to feel about experiences, whatever they were, even if you’re feeling ecstatic. It was like being on a drug – you know it’s going to finish. And there’s this underlying knowledge that this isn’t permanent, this isn’t forever. This is going to start and end, and then I’ll be back being me again.

Question: Whereas the place that you’ve found in yourself, it’s not like that at all?

Linda: No, no. And that’s what I mean there’s a certain pressure in it, you can’t get out of it – it’s like you’re trapped in freedom, so it’s forever. It’s not just for a day or a couple of days; this is it! It’s incredible, it’s amazing, but it did take a while. And I don’t feel that now about that pressure, but for years I did off and on feel it. I don’t feel it so much now, but it took a long time to grow into it and to become established in that enough, to feel firmly established without feeling that pressure.

One of my favourite sayings from Barry Long is, “There’s peace but there’s no rest.” And that’s how it is, there’s this incredible peace, it’s just amazing, but you can’t rest in it. It’s so vibrant and everything is changing all the time – you have to keep up with it. At first it can be a bit of a struggle, but then when you *become* that change there’s no resistance, or almost no resistance. I’d say as long as you’re in the body there is this tiny bit of resistance, or less and less as the body purifies. And when the body is fully purified you die, the body dies. But until that point I think a bit of resistance is necessary, and it really keeps you on your toes and keeps it all a bit more edgy. Because you get used to that edginess and you want that edginess and you want new challenges. You can’t stagnate.

So yes, it’s forever, it’s infinity. It’s forever, eternal, never ends. It’s not an experience.

Question: So it’s like a metamorphosis where you’ve turned into something else in a sense?

Linda: Yes, in a sense.

Question: You’ve come out of the... You’re the butterfly so to speak?

Linda: Yes, in a way. It’s like you’ve come out of gaol, the gaol that you’ve created yourself. And you realise you were the one who created it. Nobody put you in gaol. But then you get used to your gaol and you’re too scared to go out. So this is gradually, gradually going beyond that, seeing more, becoming more free, so that it’s not too much of a shock when you get out forever.

So a lot is happening in you.

Question: I certainly don’t want to walk away from it.

Linda: Well you can't! You might think you can but you can't now.